

# Inspection of a good school: Bishop's Castle Primary School

Oak Meadow, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire SY9 5PA

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Inspection date: 15 September 2022

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Bishop's Castle Primary School. They are eager to learn. Most are keen readers, and mathematics is a favourite subject. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, including sporting and creative activities. School trips add to pupils' enjoyment and understanding of their work.

Pupils behave well in lessons, and disruption to learning is rare. Classrooms and corridors are orderly. Pupils feel safe. They know that there is always an adult to talk to if they have a concern. Bullying is uncommon, and any disagreements are resolved quickly. Pupils dress smartly. There is a wide range of playground equipment, and pupils play happily at social times.

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum, and pupils study a full range of subjects. However, in the past leaders have not ensured that teachers have been well trained in planning pupils' work. Pupils do not necessarily learn new knowledge in the best order. In the long term, some do not know and remember what they need to.

Leaders have the right priorities. They have drawn up strong plans to improve the school, and these are beginning to take effect. The multi-academy trust (MAT) that runs the school is providing valuable support.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have made learning to read a priority. Children start their reading promptly in the Reception Year. The school has introduced a structured programme that introduces pupils to letters and sounds in a logical order. The staff have been well trained in the teaching of phonics, and they implement the scheme well. Staff provide extra support for pupils at risk of falling behind. The school ensures that pupils have books to read at home that

match their phonics knowledge. Pupils are enthusiastic readers, and leaders intend to extend the range of texts that they read.

Pupils study all the subjects in the national curriculum. The school's curriculum is designed to allow pupils in different year groups to work in the same classroom. The planning gives some guidance to teachers to build on what pupils already know. However, teachers have not received sufficient training in how to implement much of the curriculum as leaders intend. Teachers' knowledge in some subjects is not as secure as it needs to be. Lessons and sequences of lessons do not add reliably to pupils' knowledge in a helpful way. In some instances, pupils do not remember what they should. For example, in mathematics, some pupils were not able to recall the number facts that they need to support their current learning.

Teachers do not have a thorough understanding of the purposes of assessment. Sometimes, they do not identify pupils' misconceptions. Teachers are therefore not able to adapt the learning to address the gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For the most part, these pupils generally learn well. Documents show, however, that the school's recording and communication of information about pupils with SEND is inconsistent.

Subject leaders have contributed to the planning of the school's curriculum. However, to date, they have not checked effectively on how the staff are putting it into practice. In some instances, they have not provided teachers with clear enough guidance to ensure that learning improves.

Across the school, pupils show enthusiasm for learning. They concentrate well in lessons. During the inspection, pupils demonstrated a good level of self-control. For example, both in the Reception class and in physical education lessons, they stopped their activities promptly when asked to do so. Pupils show respect for all the adults in school.

The curriculum includes topics that introduce pupils to a range of cultures and traditions. Leaders use assemblies to focus, for example, on Black History Month or the festivals of different religions. The school has offered a range of after-school activities, such as gardening club, engineering and walking. Educational visits restarted earlier in the year after the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, an upcoming trip to Pembrokeshire is designed to allow pupils to study the coastal environment and St David's Cathedral.

Over the last year, the multi-academy trust (MAT) has taken decisive action to strengthen the governance of the school. It has coordinated effective support from other schools in the trust. Newly appointed leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses, and have identified the right priorities. Their plans have started to show results, for example in the teaching of early reading. Although some feel that changes might have been managed differently, all staff are aware that the school needs to improve.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff, including those new to the school, are trained in safeguarding. Staff are vigilant, and are able to identify pupils at risk. They use an electronic system for record-keeping effectively. Leaders ensure that there is additional support for those who need it. Pupils know who to turn to if they are worried, and this helps them feel safe. Teachers make sure that pupils learn about the risks that they may face, including when using the internet.

Leaders make the right checks on the staff who join the school. The MAT provides effective oversight of safeguarding arrangements.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers sometimes do not break down longer term curriculum aims into effective sequences of learning. As a result, pupils' work is then not arranged into manageable steps that help them to know and remember more. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive effective training in how their short-term planning can best enable pupils to achieve the school's declared curriculum aims.
- Teachers are not clear about the differing purposes and contexts for assessment. In particular, they sometimes do not identify misconceptions in the classroom, and do not adapt their teaching accordingly. Leaders should make sure that teachers know how to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and then begin to address them.
- The school's records show that written information about the additional needs of pupils with SEND is inconsistent. Staff, and in particular those new to the school, do not necessarily receive all the information they need to best support the learning of individual pupils. Leaders should ensure that the school's processes for recording and communicating information about pupils with SEND are secure and applied consistently.
- In the past, leaders have not given sufficient priority to the development of subject leadership. As a result, subject leaders have not monitored how well the curriculum is being implemented. This has limited staff training and curriculum development. Senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders are clear about the school's expectations of the role. They should then provide the training and guidance to enable them to fulfil their roles effectively.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence

that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Bishop's Castle Primary School, to be good in December 2013.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145672
<b>Local authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241462
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	132
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Will Finn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kate Mather
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bishopscastle-pri.shropshire.sch.uk">www.bishopscastle-pri.shropshire.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Bishop's Castle Primary School converted to become an academy school in April 2018. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Hereford MAT. It does not have a religious character.
- The executive headteacher and the head of school took up their posts in September 2022. Some other staff are new to the school.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were also held with curriculum leaders and advisers from the MAT.

- Directors of the MAT and representatives of local governance met with the lead inspector.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils at social times, and with groups of pupils more formally.
- When inspecting safeguarding, the lead inspector looked at the school's procedures for recruiting and checking on staff suitability to work with children. He also considered the effectiveness of staff training and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans to improve the school, and records of governance meetings. They also reviewed the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents. An inspector met with parents at the start of the inspection. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, an inspector discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- An inspector listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.

### **Inspection team**

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sally Noble

Ofsted Inspector

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